



Illinois State Board of Education

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NEWS

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Illinois launching recognition program for energy efficient 'Green Ribbon' schools

State Board of Education accepting nominations from schools taking comprehensive approach to environmental education and management

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has launched the first Illinois Green Ribbon Schools awards program, recognizing schools that are leading the way to promote sustainability and environmental education. Illinois joins 32 other states participating in the pilot federal Green Ribbon Schools award program to commend the most green and healthy schools in the nation. ISBE will accept applications from schools that have integrated best practices in energy, water and waste management, healthy school environments and environmental education. The state may advance four schools to the national competition.

"We're encouraged to see the federal government recognize the good work and collaboration of Illinois schools to protect the environment and be an example for students," Governor Pat Quinn said. "The collaboration of our state agencies, in this case, the Illinois EPA, DNR, the State Board and others, is a key part of our overall strategy to continue expanding the role of sustainability in Illinois."

Illinois is among 33 states, the District of Columbia and the Bureau of Indian Education that will nominate schools to the U.S. Department of Education for the new award. Applications are due to ISBE by Feb. 12, 2012, and nominations should reflect the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools' three pillars: reduced environmental impact, improved health and environmental literacy. Illinois nominees will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education by March 22. The Department will announce winners in April.

"Environmentally efficient and healthy schools are critical to our state's wellness and fiscal future," said State Board of Education Chairman Gery J. Chico. "We encourage all schools in Illinois that have taken a comprehensive approach to environmental education and management to nominate schools to

this recognition program and inspire a new generation of great thinkers to work toward greater sustainability.”

In addition to Illinois, the District of Columbia and the Bureau of Indian Education, the participating states are: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

“We are thrilled to participate in the Green Ribbon Schools award program as it promises to showcase schools that are doing their part to improve energy efficiency and create healthy environments for students and staff,” said State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch. “This kind of recognition program not only serves to inspire other schools to move toward greater sustainability but helps prepare a generation of students to think environmentally and prepare for careers in the 21st century.”

Each state may submit up to four nominees from public or private schools serving any configuration of K-12 grades, to the U.S. Department of Education. If a state nominates more than one public school, at least one must be a school with at least 40 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

Applications for nominating Illinois schools can be found on the Illinois Green Ribbon Schools page at http://www.isbe.net/green_ribbon. Illinois will announce its nominees in March. Following the U.S. Department of Education’s announcement of winners in April 2012, there will be an award ceremony in Washington, D.C., in late May 2012. The national ceremony will be followed by local ceremonies at each of the winning schools in fall 2012. For more information about the federal Green Ribbon Schools program, visit <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/index.html>.

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